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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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DNR WORKS TO IDENTIFY SOURCES OF POLLUTION IN ELK RUN CREEK

CARROLL — DNR field office staff are scouring the Elk Run Creek watershed to improve water quality in the creek, located north of Carroll.

Following two November fish kills in the creek, a tributary of the North Raccoon River, staff from the DNR field office in Atlantic have been conducting a number of intensive investigations in the watershed to determine the source of the creek's pollution.

As a result, the DNR has identified a number of potential sources for the initial fish kill and a number of other areas that may be sources of pollution to the creek during the past month.

"The problem in the Elk Creek watershed didn't happen overnight, and it certainly won't be remedied overnight," said Dan Stipe, supervisor of the DNR field office in Atlantic. "It will take patience, but good things are happening and will continue to happen to reduce or eliminate pollution to this stream."

One problem in the watershed is manure discharging directly to the creek. The DNR is currently investigating runoff from a 700-head open lot operation, which may or may not have contributed to the initial fish kill, said Alison Manz, an environmental specialist with the DNR field office in Atlantic. The office is also investigating a 975-head cattle lot that is believed to be a likely contributor to the first fish kill.

Since the investigations of the fish kill began, DNR staff has conducted open lot assessments at both feedlots and will be working with the owners of the lots to remedy pollution problems.

While investigating these lots, DNR staff found other manure discharges and problems in the watershed. A discharge of manure was identified from an 800-head cattle lot, and staff members have conducted an open lot assessment of the lot and will be working with the owner to achieve compliance.

“This cattle lot is definitely not associated with the initial fish kill but was a likely contributor of manure to the second fish kill,” Manz said. “We will continue to investigate the Elk Run area to identify other possible sources of manure to the creek and other sources of pollution.”

Residents in the watershed can help to improve water quality in the creek by contacting the Atlantic field office when they notice a discharge to the creek or a fish kill.

“The water quality in Elk Run is obviously poor at times as evidenced by the recent fish kills,” Stipe said. “We have talked to residents in the area who basically had accepted that there are occasional discharges and fish kills in the creek. Some of these residents will now likely contact the DNR when they see problems in Elk Run.”

In addition to onsite investigations, the DNR is considering holding a public forum regarding concerns about the contamination of Elk Run.

The DNR will continue to investigate the incidents and will consider appropriate legal action.

For more information, contact Alison Manz or Dan Stipe at the DNR field office in Atlantic at (712) 243-1934.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS SOUGHT ON WATER QUALITY PLAN FOR YEADER CREEK

DES MOINES — Plans for improving water quality at Yeader Creek in Des Moines will be discussed at a public meeting on Dec. 14. The meeting will be held at the Des Moines South Side Library at 1111 Porter Ave at 6:30 p.m. Comments on the draft plan will be received through Dec. 27.

A draft TMDL — or Total Maximum Daily Load — has been developed for Yeader Creek. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain its designated use such as maintaining aquatic life, allowing body contact such as swimming or being used as a drinking water supply.

TMDLs also include plans on how water quality can be improved through conservation efforts and best management practices in the watershed. After receiving public comments, the TMDL will be forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.

Yeader Creek is impaired due to deicing agents (glycol) that cause aesthetically objectionable conditions in the stream and are toxic to aquatic life. Ethylene glycol and propylene glycol are two common deicing agents used at the Des Moines International Airport. The airport has a NPDES permit from the DNR, which limits the amount of glycol that can be discharged to the stream.

High levels of glycol in the stream can cause aesthetic concerns such as water coloration and substrate coloration, and aquatic life concerns due to glycol toxicity and the demand on dissolved oxygen in the stream.

Recommendations made by the DNR for improving water quality in Yeader Creek include:

- Continued compliance of the NPDES permit by the Des Moines International Airport
- Increase public education by the City of Des Moines in regards to urban stormwater draining to Yeader creek
- Prevent illegal dumping in the stream and report any spills going into Yeader Creek

The draft TMDLs can be obtained and comments can be made using the following sources:

- Internet <http://www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/tmdl/publicnotice.html>
- E-mail to: danelle.haake@dnr.state.ia.us
- Telephone by calling: Danelle Haake at (515) 281-6064
- Mail by writing: Danelle Haake, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319

For more information, contact Danelle Haake at (515) 281-6064 or Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395.

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REVISED SPECIAL WASTE AUTHORIZATION PROCESS FOR LANDFILLS

DES MOINES – Landfill officials can now process special waste more quickly through an improved DNR issuance process.

As part of the new process, special waste generators are asked to complete the Special Waste Authorization (SWA) application and send the application to the receiving landfill. The receiving landfill is then made aware of the proposed waste to be disposed. The application is then forwarded to the DNR where the decision is made to authorize the special waste disposal.

In response to concerns that were raised about the SWA application process, DNR staff and stakeholders looked at methods for improvement. The improved application process was the result of a lack of communication between the parties involved.

“We had landfills unaware that a special waste was being approved for their landfill,” said Alex Moon, senior environmental specialist with the DNR. “Now landfills sign the application so we know they saw it. The new process should save us time when reviewing the application and allows us to process the application more quickly.”

As part of the Iowa Administrative Code, the intent of the SWA is to provide safe and proper management for disposal of waste that presents a threat to human health or the environment such as industrial process waste, pollution control waste or toxic waste. Any waste that might be difficult to dispose of in a sanitary landfill is considered a special waste.

The new process for issuing SWA’s was to be implemented by landfills no later than mid November. This process is for new SWA applications or for renewals. Existing SWA’s do not need to be revised using the new application process until the time of renewal.

SWA applications are available online at www.iowadnr.com/waste/sw/permitting.html.

For more information, contact Jim Thayer with the DNR at (515) 281-3426 or by e-mail at Jim.Thayer@dnr.state.ia.us.

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PUBLIC HEARINGS SET FOR DNR ENGINEERING STANDARDS FOR OPEN FEEDLOTS

DES MOINES — The DNR has proposed rule changes for animal feeding operations. The purpose of the amendments is to create a separate division within the current rules for regulations pertaining specifically to open feedlots.

“These rules will clearly define engineering standards for those open feedlots that need a permit,” said Gene Tinker, coordinator of the DNR’s animal feeding operations.

The proposed rules would establish minimum design standards for manure and effluent control structures for open feedlots. The DNR was directed to develop the standards by a 2003 change in state law.

Five public hearings will be held on the proposed rule for engineering standards. The dates, locations and times are:

- Jan. 4, at 8:30 a.m. in the Red Oak Fire Station, 1904 N. Broadway St., in Red Oak.

- Jan. 4, at 6:30 p.m., in Room 142-146 of the main building at the Des Moines Area Community College – Carroll Campus, 906 N. Grant Road, in Carroll.
- Jan. 5, at 8:30 a.m. in the Spencer Events Center, 800 West 18th St., Spencer, IA
- Jan. 5, at 6:30 p.m. at the Lime Creek Nature Center, 3501 Lime Creek Road in Mason City.
- Jan. 7, at 8:30 a.m. in the Iowa Rooms A and B on the 3rd floor of the Iowa Hall, Kirkwood Community College, 6301 Kirkwood Boulevard S.W., in Cedar Rapids.

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing during the public hearings. All other comments must be received no later than Jan. 7, 2005. Any person who intends to attend a public hearing and has special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility, should contact Gene Tinker.

Written comments on the proposed rules should be directed to Gene Tinker at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 502 East Ninth St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319, Fax (515) 281-8895, or by e-mail to gene.tinker@dnr.state.ia.us.

For more information, contact Gene Tinker at (515) 281-3103.